



POLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL, INC.
Szkoła Języka Polskiego im. Jana Pawła II

P.O. BOX 2221

New Britain, Connecticut 06050-2221

Testimony of Jolanta Bicki
Polish Language School
Accreditation Coordinator
Raised Bill #5820
March 10, 2008

Chairman Senator Gaffey, Chairman Representative Fleischman, and Members of the Committee, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today in regards to the Raised Bill # 5820.

My name is Jolanta Bicki and I represent the parents of the Polish Language School students. I was born, raised and educated in Poland and in the year 1988 came to the United States. What I love about this country is the fact that everyone is entitled to pursue their dream as well as live and feel free. I feel I am part of the American "melting pot" but also feel free to stay connected to my Polish roots. From the time my sons were born in this country, I have been working hard on teaching them about our heritage. In addition to speaking Polish at home, I also wanted them to read and write Polish, and learn about the history and geography of Poland. In order to do that, I have signed them up to attend Polish Language School in New Britain, CT

The school is in existence since 1960 and since then has graduated thousands of students. This year, 604 students, from Kindergarten through 8th grade, are attending the school. The classes take place at Pulaski Middle School in New Britain and we are very grateful to the New Britain Board of Education for allowing us to use that facility. All together, there are 27 classes taught by teachers who were certified in Poland. Strict hiring procedures are followed, and all of our teachers have the appropriate credentials. School is in session on 33 Saturday mornings during the regular school year, starting at 8:30 and ending at 12:45pm. As a parent, I am responsible for covering the cost of all eight years of schooling (about \$3000) as well as for the cost of books, school supplies and additional exam fees, but most importantly, I am responsible for bring the children to school.

I want you to understand how difficult it is for parents to motivate the children to attend school on Saturday mornings while most of their friends have the day off. My children have to wake-up at 7 am in order to make it to class on time. Then, while their friends are watching TV, playing video games or enjoying their free time, my children are in school until 12:45. In addition to attending class, they are also required to complete homework assignments. However, it is very important for my husband and I, just like it is extremely important to all the other parents, that our children attend Polish School and learn about their past. We all believe that the fact that the children are knowledgeable about their heritage makes them confident and strong individuals. It would be wonderful to know, that after eight years of giving up free Saturday mornings, the children are entitled to receive recognition, in the form of high school credits after passing standardized test. Therefore I am asking you to grant us our wish – the wish for recognizing all of our effort to feel proud of our Polish heritage. I would like you to allow the children to receive the credit for their hard work.

I would like to express my appreciation to all of you, but especially to State Representatives Mr. Tim O'Brien and Peter Tercyak, and Senator Donald DeFronzo for helping us with this process. Thank you again.
